

W5YI

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable.

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Fred Maia, W5YI, Editor, P.O. Box 565101, Dallas, TX 75356-5101
Electronic mail: fmaia@internetMCI.com Website: <http://www.w5yi.org>
Tel. 817-461-6443 FAX: 817-548-9594

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May 15, 1998

ARRL: Compliance with Band Plans is "Good Amateur Practice!"

The American Radio Relay League has filed a fifteen page *Request for Declaratory Ruling* asking that the FCC mandate that band plan compliance equates with good amateur practice.

The FCC assigned rulemaking file number, RM-9259, to the request which is very unusual. RM numbers generally are assigned only to *Petitions for Rulemaking*, not to *Requests for a Declaratory Judgment*. It is obvious the FCC wants input from the amateur community.

The League's April 3rd request wants the FCC to affirm that amateur operation that conflicts with established voluntary band plans and causes interference or adversely affects those operating in accordance with applicable band plans would violate FCC rules.

The ARRL wants the FCC to acknowledge that hams should be familiar with -- and should abide by -- voluntary band plans applicable to the bands they operate and to state that those who don't operate in harmony with those plans are not operating "in accord with good amateur practice."

Excerpts from the ARRL filing

"[The League] requests that the Commission issue a Declaratory Ruling at an early date clarifying that 'good amateur practice' as contemplated in 47 C.F.R. §97.101(a) entails compliance with the voluntary band plans adopted and amended from time to time through the cooperative efforts of amateur

radio operators across the country, and around the world."

The League says that good amateur practice "...provides that amateur operators must comply not only with the letter of the Rules, but with the self-regulatory characteristics of Amateur Radio as well."

"...Given the substantial growth of the Amateur Service over time, and the increasing use of the MF, HF, VHF, UHF, and microwave allocations, the focus of the Amateur Service has properly been on the development of voluntary band plans for the co-operative sharing of the limited allocations in the Amateur Service, and the accommodation of all types of communications interests. The Commission has relied on this voluntary band planning effort as the proper substitute for more detailed regulation of the Amateur Service."

The implication is, however, that the American Radio Relay League and the International Amateur Radio Union should be the organizations to dictate those band plans. On page 4, the ARRL mentions "...national band plans adopted by the League..." and "...[international] band planning, of necessity, must be handled by the IARU." (Many amateurs believe that the IARU is in reality an extension of ARRL since the League supplies its leadership.)

The ARRL does, however, recognize "...that compliance with regional band plans developed by recognized coordination bodies (which may well conflict with national band plans) is required as an

essential element of 'good amateur practice' in the regions in which those band plans apply."

ARRL says band plans are important

"Over the past decade, the Commission has wisely and cautiously followed a path of deregulation in most, if not all, of its various services," ARRL said.

"With particular respect to the Amateur Service, in which advancement of the radio art can only occur in an atmosphere conducive to experimentation, and where there is a tradition of self-regulation, this trend is welcomed. ...rigid enforcement of band plans is neither warranted nor feasible."

"Nevertheless, as more users attempt to operate in increasingly crowded spectrum, it becomes even more important for the Commission to define minimal standards of 'good amateur practice' in order to prevent interference to rogue operators.

"A Declaratory Ruling providing a clear statement of support for voluntary, accepted band plans will serve the dual purpose of highlighting the importance of band plans in the amateur community, and setting a standard of cooperative behavior which is expected of licensees.

"Furthermore, a Declaratory Ruling (as opposed to a formal change in the Commission's Rules) would provide sufficient flexibility for informal, cooperative resolution of interference problems without resort to the Commission."

"While the Commission has properly declined to incorporate the substance of national amateur radio band plans in its Rules, it has consistently supported the voluntary band plans as an inherent element of 'good amateur practice.'"

"...because non-compliance with accepted band plans which causes interference to one or more amateur stations that is or are operating in accordance with those accepted band plans cannot be considered good amateur practice under any circumstances, the League requests that the Commission issue a Declaratory Ruling which expressly determines that compliance with generally accepted, regional and national voluntary band plans is an indisputable element of 'good amateur practice.'"

The ARRL said "A committee of the League's Board of Directors has recently reviewed the level of voluntary compliance with band plans in various amateur allocations, including MF and HF bands, and has concluded that there has been some notable deterioration in adherence to the plans. The League suggests that a recognition of band plans, and a Commission admonition to adhere to them, would promote greater awareness of and compliance with those band plans without changing their nature."

The League added that it "...is not asking for a rule that would carve the band plans in stone, or to incorporate them by reference in the Rules. It simply seeks the iden-

tification of generally accepted, voluntary band plans in the Amateur Service in the rules as an integral component of 'good amateur practice.'"

"Repeater coordination is of the same nature, it is voluntary, but it has been described by the Commission as a necessary element of shared frequency operation by fixed stations in the Amateur Service. It is the 'minimum joint effort by the amateur community' to facilitate shared frequency operation of repeaters. Voluntary adherence to accepted band plans is no different, and deserves the same recognition to promote voluntary compliance."

Statements in support or opposition to the ARRL Request for a Declaratory Ruling are due to the FCC by May 21.

FILING COMMENTS OF RULEMAKING PETITIONS

There are well defined rules for submitting formal comments on rulemaking petitions to the FCC. They are found in Subparts "A" and "C" of Part 1, Title 47 (Telecommunication) of the Code of Federal Regulations. Subpart "A" covers "General Rules" and Subpart "C" covers notice and comment procedures in "Rulemaking Proceedings." Here is a digest of what you should know to properly file comments:

Section 1.403 - All petitions are given a file number (RM-####) and a Public Notice issued entitled: "Petitions for Rulemaking Filed."

Section 1.405 - Any interested person may file a statement in support or in opposition to a petition prior to Commission action on the petition but not later than 30 days after the Public Notice. The statement must be accompanied by proof-of-service (mailing is acceptable) upon the original petitioner. Up to 15 additional days are permitted for any interested person to file a reply to statements in support or opposition.

Section 1.407 - A proposed rulemaking proceeding is issued where the FCC determines that the petition discloses sufficient reasons in support of the action requested. The FCC could issue a final rule amending the rules where notice and comment is not required. In all other cases, the petition for rulemaking will be denied.

Section 1.412 - Rule changes may be adopted without notice and comment if the FCC finds that public procedures are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest. The FCC then issues rule changes without notice and comment.

Section 1.413 - PROPOSED RULEMAKING - A docket number is assigned and the a notice of rule issuance or repeal is issued. A time limit for public comments and replies is established for the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM.)

Section 1.415 - Interested persons are given an opportunity to participate in the NPRM and a reasonable time

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provided for the submission of comments and replies to those comments.

Section 1.419 - Formal comments and replies must conform to the requirements of Section 1.49 (see below.) An original and 4 copies of all comments shall be furnished to the Commission. Address to: Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20554. The FCC Secretary retains the original and one copy and forwards two copies to the appropriate bureau. In the case of amateur radio filings, this is the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB.) One copy goes to the FCC's Information Office. Participants wishing each Commissioner to also have a personal copy should submit an additional five copies - a total of ten.

Members of the general public (not attorneys representing a telecommunications client) who wish to express their interest in filing informally may do so by submitting an original and one copy of their comments without regard to form provided that the Docket Number is specified in the heading.

Section 1.421 - In any rulemaking proceeding, the FCC may issue a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and the public will be given the opportunity to submit comments.

Section 1.427 - With very few exceptions, new FCC rules will be made effective not less than 30 days from the date it is published in the Federal Register.

Section 1.429 - Any interested person may petition for reconsideration of a final decision. A petition based on new or unknown facts must be filed within 30 days of public notice of the new rule. Oppositions to a petition for reconsideration must be filed within 15 days of the Notice of petition for reconsideration. A copy must be supplied to the person who filed the opposition.

Section 1.430 - INQUIRIES - The above guidelines also apply to Notices of Inquiry (NOI), except that such proceedings do not result in the adoption of rules. A NOI asks for information about an FCC concern over a particular matter and solicits comments from the public as to whether adoption, amendment or repeal of a rule may be desirable.

Section 1.48 - SPECIFICATIONS OF FORMAL PLEADINGS - All documents:

- 1.) Must be typewritten or word processed mechanically.
- 2.) Must be on 8-1/2" x 11 inch paper.
- 3.) Margins must be set so that printed material does not exceed 6-1/2 x 9 inches. (One inch margins.)
- 4.) Printed material may be in any typeface at least 12-points in height.
- 5.) Body of text must be double spaced.
- 6.) Footnotes and indented quotations may be single spaced but must be at least 12-points in height.
- 7.) Pleadings may be printed on both sides of the of the paper in which case documents shall be stapled twice or otherwise bound so that it opens like a book.

- 8.) Pleadings that use only one side of the paper shall be stapled in the upper left hand corner. (This, apparently, is the preferred method.)
- 9.) Pleadings which exceed ten pages must include a table of contents with page references.
- 10.) Pleadings which exceed ten pages must include a summary of the filing which "....should be a succinct, but accurate and clear condensation of the substance of the filing."
- 11.) Documents exceeding ten and less than 25 pages, this summary should seldom exceed one page and never two pages. The summary of documents exceeding 25 pages should seldom exceed two pages and never more than five pages.
- 12.) The page count requirements do not include exhibits or appendices.

PROPER HEADING TO BE USED ON FCC PETITIONS AND FORMAL PLEADINGS

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)	
Compliance With Applicable)	
Voluntary Band Plans in the)	RM-9259
Amateur Radio Service)	

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT (or OPPOSITION)

Include:

- (1) Who are you and your qualifications to comment
- (2) Your specific interest.
- (3) State your position and why you support or dissent.
- (4) Your conclusions

INCREASED COMMERCIAL SHARING OF AMATEUR SPECTRUM PROPOSED

On April 22, the Land Mobile Communications Council (LMCC) petitioned the FCC to satisfy "immediate needs" for commercial spectrum by allocating 420-430 MHz and 440-450 MHz to the Private Mobile Radio Services (PMRS). It was assigned RM-9267 by the FCC.

The PMRS services are used mainly for radio dispatching and industrial communications. LMCC also recommended reallocation of other bands for future needs. Amateur repeater use is popular in 440-450 MHz, with satellite links and amateur TV in 430-440 MHz.

"It is recognized that these sub-bands are used on a secondary basis by the radio amateur community," the organization said. "However, the LMCC believes that the 430-440 MHz sub-band is more important to the amateurs for use in emerging technologies such as links with spacecraft and amateur television applications. Amateur applications in 420-430/440-450 MHz should remain secondary to PMRS."

"Furthermore, to the extent that new PMRS

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advanced services are implemented here, equipment availability and technology would benefit amateurs pursuing such applications as compressed video television in the 430-440 MHz band," it added.

(A "secondary" radio service must accept interference from, and may not cause interference to, any "primary" radio service in a band.)

LMCC is an influential coalition of 22 trade associations including the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association, the Personal Communications Industry Association, and groups devoted to transportation, forestry, alarms, gas and electric utilities, construction, mining, petroleum, and fire and police radio.

The 420-430 MHz segment already is used for PMRS in Detroit, Buffalo and Cleveland. LMCC said, "History shows that a substantial number of PMRS systems have been implemented in these cities, with no interference problems, either with Canadian systems across the border or with federal government systems in the U.S." LMCC wants to expand the availability of this spectrum beyond the three cities, to nationwide use.

The primary allocation in 420-450 MHz is to the federal government. According to SpectrumGuide by Bennett Kobb, KC5CW, "This band is used for telemetry, telecommand and long-range surveillance by land, ship and airborne stations—for early missile warning, detection of low-observable military targets, and tracking of all objects in Earth orbit."

Among military systems in 420-450 MHz are the Air Force Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) in Alaska, England and Greenland; and the Precision Acquisition Vehicle Entry Phased Array Warning System (PAVE PAWS) in the lower 48 states.

"A reduction in military use of this band is foreseen and it could be that most PMRS services could co-exist in most significant geographical areas of the U.S., with perhaps PAVE PAWS geographical restrictions in parts of California, Georgia, Massachusetts and Texas," LMCC said.

It also pointed out that wind profilers, used in weather forecasting and pollution studies, operate at 449 MHz. It said that "ideally" this wind profiler use should be "discouraged or at least minimized," in favor of higher frequency operation (such as 915 MHz).

LMCC said it recognized that "amateur radio service will see a net constriction by the recommended reallocation of 420-430/440-450 MHz" and that some spectrum in the 1300 MHz range "might be reallocated to amateur service to offset the constriction." For example, LMCC suggested that 1390-1395/1427-1432 MHz might be reallocated to Amateur Radio with 1395-1400/1670-1675 MHz going to PMRS.

The 1385-1400 and 1427-1435 MHz bands are key military spectrum that, over the objections of the Defense

Department, are supposed to be auctioned to the private sector due to two budget bills already made into law. But defense systems will be allowed to remain in portions of these bands for many years and must be protected from interference by any nongovernment users. "Many of these protected sites are in key urban areas such as the east coast and would substantially limit any potential PMRS deployments in those areas," LMCC observed.

Amateur and military bands are not the only ones targeted by LMCC. The organization also sees opportunities to use aeronautical spectrum, for the longer term needs of commercial/industrial land mobile operators.

LMCC recommended that the government reallocate 85 MHz of the 960-1215 MHz aeronautical band to PMRS by the year 2010, with an additional 70 MHz in the band reallocated to public safety uses.

This air navigation spectrum will, according to LMCC, see decreasing aeronautical use in the years to come. There is a "worldwide movement" away from conventional navigation systems and towards Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) such as the Global Positioning System (GPS), according to LMCC.

"It is recognized that the aeronautical navigation services in this band are of considerable importance," LMCC said. "On the other hand, it is clear that these services will shift to the new GNSS operations in the not-too-distant future and that this spectrum offers the last chance for PMRS to access spectrum that is both sufficient in scope and low enough in frequency to satisfy foreseeable future needs, including the perceived explosion in demand for advanced, wide bandwidth applications."

A key question is whether any of these bands will be available to PMRS on a non-auction basis. The FCC and Congress have taken in billions of dollars from auctions, so they are extremely eager to auction licenses in any bands that become available. Auctions occur when there is "mutual exclusivity" in a band, which simply means that more applications are received for licenses than there are frequency/geographic slots available.

Lobbying by LMCC-member organizations managed to get Congress to exempt certain types of PMRS from auctions, such as police and fire services and services used by utilities, pipelines, railroads, and some transportation-related services. LMCC asked the FCC to rely on the trade associations to coordinate frequency use in the "new" bands so as to avoid mutual exclusivity and avoid the commingling of auctionable and non-auctionable services in a band.

Commenting on the LMCC petition, however, FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau chief Dan Phythyon said on April 29 that he and the FCC were not convinced that auctions must be avoided in the PMRS; or that many PMRS users could not use commercial services such as cellular phones. Preliminary public comments on RM-9267 close on May 30.

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CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY

■ **For the first time, you can follow a Mount Everest climb on the Internet in real-time!** An AT&T designed telemedicine link between the snowy reaches of Mount Everest and the United States will permit medical and other data on climbers to be monitored remotely.

The data will travel via satellite, trans-oceanic fiber and global ISDN from physicians at the climbers' base camp on the mountain at 18,000 feet to the Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, Conn., and the MIT Media Lab in Cambridge, Mass.

The network will transmit wellness, endurance and physiologic characteristics, such as heart rates, respiratory, circulatory and other data on climbers in the Everest Extreme Expedition that begins later this month.

Climbers on Mount Everest will wear personal status monitors, vital-signs monitors and specialized cameras on their heads, which will transmit continuous health and position data and live video to the base camp staff. The information will be analyzed to determine real-time medical conditions and to further understanding of human performance in extreme environments.

Medical data, global positioning data, video clips and photos will be sent to the MIT Media Lab and posted by AT&T to the Mount Everest Web Site located at <<http://www.att.com/everest>>.

The expedition members include five men -- four Americans and one Briton -- ranging in age from 32 to 44. Other Everest Internet links are: MIT Media Lab: <<http://www.everest.org>>, Climbing: <<http://www.mountainzone.com>> News: <<http://www.usatoday.com/life/everest>>

EMERGING COMMUNICATIONS

■ **Motorola's low-hanging artificial ionosphere is just about complete.** China, Russia and the U.S. have been co-operating in the launch of the 66 satellites needed for the Iridium satellite constellation. All 12 Iridium gateway facilities are also complete.

Iridium is a commercial global wireless network that combines the reach of 66 interconnected low-earth orbit satellites

with land-based wireless systems to enable subscribers to communicate from virtually anywhere in the world using palm-sized handheld pagers and telephones.

Testing of the system is now underway in North, Central and South America, Thailand, Japan and Russia. Operational licenses have been granted to 47 countries and 80 (many third world developing) countries will also participate in the program. It cost nearly \$4 billion to deploy the LEO communications reflector. Formal commercial service introduction is scheduled for September.

Iridium was designed and built by Motorola's Satellite Communication Group in Chandler, Arizona. Iridium is owned by an international consortium of twenty investor organizations.

COMPUTER INFO

■ **Microsoft has warned Wall Street it can expect "negative consequences" for the PC industry if their new Windows 98 operating system is delayed** because of anti-trust action. The Dept. of Justice is troubled with Microsoft's handling with the Internet Explorer browser which in Windows 98 becomes an integral part of the operating system. Critics say Microsoft's treatment effectively precludes competing browsers.

All major computer companies are now in the process of installing Windows 98 operating systems in their new PCs which will shortly be shipped to distributors, dealers and stores. Sales begin to the public on June 25th. For them, it is just about past the point of no return.

Microsoft says any interference with their marketing plan will effectively shut down growth in the PC industry and companies who have products based on the new \$109 operating system upgrade. Analysts believe investors can expect a major technology sector market "correction" if the DOJ steps in and limits Windows 98.

We also heard that there might be a need for a software patch to Win-98. The system embarrassingly crashed when Bill Gates, Microsoft CEO was in the middle of a campaign speech for the upgrade at a huge industry convention in Chicago.

INTERNET NEWS

■ **Microsoft is working all of the on-ramps to the high speed Internet Superhighway - broadcast, cable and telephone.** The software giant has teamed with Intel and Compaq to support the telephone industry's new high speed Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) and with cable operators to support their newly formed Cable Broadband Forum (and high speed cable modems.) Microsoft owns Comcast (the nation's fourth largest cable operator) and Web-TV - an online service available to broadcast and cable TV operators.

About 200,000 customers already have signed up for high-speed cable modems ...a far cry from the 25 million households linked to the Web by phone lines. The objective is to have Microsoft operating systems and software linking every consumer and business to the Internet.

■ **NetChannel, Inc., - a competitor of Web-TV - has thrown in the towel.** The San Francisco based company told its 10,000- customers last week that it is shutting down. NetChannel provided Internet access through \$199-\$249 TV set top boxes built by Thomson Consumer Electronics - the same manufacturer that developed the DirecTV satellite hardware. NetChannel had hoped to work out a joint venture with America Online.

WASHINGTON WHISPERS

■ **Gary L. Stanford, W4FDP - Chief of the FCC's Licensing Division has retired.** Gary joined the Commission in 1961 as an electronics engineer. In May 1986, Gary was named Chief, Licensing Division of the FCC Private Radio Bureau, Gettysburg Office, and was elected into the Senior Executive Service in July 1992. He retired May 1st from the FCC as Associate Bureau Chief for Operations, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Gettysburg, PA.

■ **The Government Printing Office now has the 1997 edition of Title 47 Code of Federal Regulations (Telecommunications)** available for sale. The complete set consists of five volumes.

Part 0-19	\$34.00	Part 40-69	\$23.00
Part 20-39	\$27.00	Part 70-79	\$35.00
Part 80-End			

Part 80-End \$43.00
Ham operators will find Part 0-19 (which contains the FCC's administrative procedures rules) and Part 80-End

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(Maritime, aviation, business, personal and amateur radio) particularly useful. Credit card orders go to: (202) 512-1800 (Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4 p.m.) All FCC Rules have been updated to October 1997.

■ It looks like the V-chip will start showing up in stores July 1, 1999.

The V (as in "violence") chip firmware permits parents to control what their family watches on television by accessing only programs with certain content ratings. Half of all new TV sets with 13-inch or larger screens made after that date must contain a V-chip ...with all new sets having the capability by Jan. 1, 1000. Personal computers with TV tuners are also included under the new rules.

■ Here is a quote appearing in *Broadcasting and Cable industry magazine* from FCC Chairman Bill Kennard concerning where he stands on low power broadcasting:

"For virtually my career I've been concerned about ensuring that there are opportunities for people to participate in the broadcast community. It troubles me that there are fewer opportunities to do that today, but we know that there are many, many people who still want to speak to their communities over the airwaves. These are community groups, churches, small businesses and people who want to have use of the public airwaves. So I want to get as many ideas on the table as we can to create more opportunity in this business. I understand that many broadcasters feel this might be threatening to them. And I want to work with them and better understand how we could create more opportunity without undermining the incumbents in the business."

AMATEUR RADIO

■ Hong Kong amateurs to lose access to eighty percent of 70 cm band.

The *Hong Kong Amateur Transmitting Society* (HARTS) advises that the Hong Kong Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) has proposed to end amateur access to the 430 to 438 MHz (70 cm) band. At present the 430 to 440 MHz band is allocated in Hong Kong to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis.

OFTA says there is industry interest in providing radiolocation services in Hong

Kong such as vehicle location systems.

"At present, development of such systems are constrained by spectrum availability. ...The operation of vehicle location systems normally employs spread spectrum techniques which require continuous blocks of spectrum of several MHz. Using the same part of spectrum for both radiolocation and the amateur service may not be feasible. It is therefore proposed that the two services should be segregated. Radiolocation services shall operate between 430-438 MHz, while amateur services shall operate between 438-440 MHz." HARTS is the national amateur radio society in Hong Kong.

■ After two years of preparation the 3B7 DXpedition left Zurich, Switzerland on May 2nd enroute to St. Brandon (Cargados Islands). They were partially funded by the ARRL Colvin Award.

St. Brandon is part of the Republic of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean and is number 17 on the most-wanted list of DXCC "countries." The Cargados-Carajos archipelago (St. Brandon) consists of 22 small islands. The 3B7 camp will be established on Raphael Island. The crew consists of one woman and fourteen men.

The ARRL Colvin Award Grants Committee voted to grant the Canton of Zug branch of the Union of Swiss Short-Wave Amateurs \$5000 for the DXpedition. The group, under the leadership of Karl Graetzer, HB9JAI, also has financial and equipment from Yaesu and Cushcraft, as well as from various DX clubs and commercial sponsors around the world. In total, the DXpedition raised \$150,000 to fund the trip.

"We are very happy to have the contribution of the Colvin Award," Graetzer said this week. "It will help a lot."

The government of Mauritius Telecommunication Authority advised on April 21st that the temporary operating licence had been granted and can be picked up at their office. The group plans to arrive by boat on May 6 (gear will be ferried to shore by small boats) and to operate as 3B7RF from May 7 until May 17.

Operation is expected to be continuous on all bands, including VHF, depending on propagation. Modes will include CW, SSB, RTTY and SSTV. Two individual sites will be set up with four operating positions. Fifteen operators from Switzerland, the U.S., Japan, and Israel will share on-the-air duties.

The direct QSL address is: HB9RF P.O. Box 37, CH 6319 Allenwinden, Switzerland. Include at least \$2.00 (or 2 IRCs) and an SASE. More information on the St. Brandon DXpedition is available on the Web at <http://www.3b7-brandon.ch>. (Thanks, Karl/HB9JAI, Amnon/4X1DF and ARRL)

■ From amateur to commercial satellites. Richard Limebear G3RWL, AMSAT-UK's Communications Officer writes that *The Queen's Award for Technological Achievement has been won by Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd. (SSTL)*, based at the Surrey Space Centre in Guildford, England in recognition of their national standing as a centre of excellence in the research, development and application of small satellites.

SSTL got its start when the Department of Electrical Engineering at the University of Surrey supported a very active Radio Amateur society. The group had a significant interest in the amateur spacecraft built and launched by AMSAT, the amateur satellite organization. A satellite tracking station was developed to support OSCAR 6 - an amateur low-earth orbiting (LEO) satellite in 1974.

The station became one of the prime command stations, and by careful control and management of the power budget, prolonged the life of the amateur satellite by several years. Subsequently the station was used in the OSCAR-7 and OSCAR-8 missions.

In early 1978 a NASA launch opportunity became available, and sufficient funds were raised for the first University of Surrey satellite mission, UoSAT-1.

OSCAR -11 was built at the University of Surrey and launched on March 1, 1984. It was the first amateur satellite to demonstrate the feasibility of store and forward packet digital LEO communications.

SSTL was formed in 1985 as a company wholly owned by the University of Surrey, England, within the Surrey Space Centre - to develop commercial cost-effective small satellites.

Proud of his team's achievements, Professor Martin Sweeting, Chief Executive Officer, Surrey Space Centre, said: "The Award demonstrates the high levels of achievement and national acclaim with which Surrey is held within the space industry. Internationally the Centre is renowned as specialists in the engineering of small satellites with a worldwide customer-base."

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LOW POWER FM RADIO STATION PETITIONS DRAW FIRESTORM OF COMMENTS TO FCC

The FCC is amassing stacks of comments from the public on petitions RM 9208, 9242 and 9246 to create new, low power AM and FM radiobroadcasting services (*W5YI Report*, March 15, 1998).

Among the commenters, most existing broadcasters are incensed that the FCC would even consider the idea of allowing more stations on the air. Private individuals who commented, including operators of and listeners to illegal stations, pleaded with the FCC to permit some type of "microbroadcasting."

In some cases, the situation is reversed, with a few current licensees supporting microbroadcasting and some individuals opposed to the idea. Here is a summary of selected comments just received at the FCC:

"Sophisticated broadcast equipment, capable of reaching an entire community and fully compliant with FCC technical requirements, can now be purchased by the average citizen for about the same cost as a good stereo system. Furthermore, advances in technology have rendered much of the FCC technical regimen for allocating broadcast licenses obsolete.

"A LPFM service can be part of a solution to the usurpation of scores of community voices by faceless, bland and generic non-community programming that has pretenses to community service and representation." - *KQEZ-FM, Houston AK*

"Skinner [Rodger Skinner, W4FM, petitioner for LPFM] quotes information from the FCC Website, noting that roughly 13,000 individuals and groups express interest in starting a low-power station each year. Yet, with his somewhat confusing provisions an initial launch of low power broadcasting under RM-9242 would allow only one LPFM station per market.

"Given roughly 260 Arbitron-rated 'markets,' this allows roughly 2% of those individuals and groups to be served by the Skinner petition. RM-9242 cannot guarantee listening choices will be 'more' or 'better.' Because this petition lacks programming restrictions, a potential LPFM owner could choose to simulcast their properties, or run a satellite-driven jukebox." - *Kevin Lange, N9NFT, Terre Haute IN*

"The Commission must consider the ways in which industry consolidation has left the public interest behind. There are far fewer individual licensees where each creates its own approach to serving the public, than prior to 1996. Much programming has been standardized and homogenized. Minority groups, and minority points of view, are less frequently heard or represented. News broadcasts and public service programming have dimin-

ished. The creation of an LPFM service, if properly framed by the Commission, could go a long way toward restoring and improving the valuable—but lost—service that radio broadcasting can provide to the general public." - *Dennis Jackson, Wilton CT*

"Susquehanna's main concern with micro-power broadcasting is that it would probably not remain 'micro' for very long. If the Commission could make spectrum available for micro-power FM stations, the equipment available from Radio Free Berkeley and others will quickly destroy the operation of any licensee that is operating with a maximum of one watt." - *Susquehanna Radio Corp., York PA*

"As the microradio stations proliferate, they will no doubt target the very advertisers that are targeted by the local radio broadcaster. While competition in and of itself may not be something to be feared, or an evil to be prevented by regulation, concerns about unfair competition have always been a seminal reason for oversight by regulatory agencies." - *State Broadcasters Associations*

"I believe the commercial broadcast industry is against the proposition of low power broadcasting because of greed and its fear that such authorization will dilute audience market shares that may result in profit reduction. Further, corporate executives make out-of-market programming decisions for radio station properties with no desire to satisfy the overall public interest of the market to which the stations are licensed." - *Claude B. Parker, WA5Z, Houston, TX*

"The addition of a new class of low power stations such as the proposed microstations is particularly a bad idea because such low power facilities have the potential of adding thousands of stations across the U.S. Problems such as illegal pirate radio will continue.

"Present operators of illegal pirate stations have stated publicly through their attorney that they do not have to follow the law and that they have a free speech right to broadcast whatever they want, whenever they want, and wherever they want." - *New Jersey Broadcasters Association*

"The untapped source of spectrum for these proposed Low Power Broadcast Radio Services is the 100 kHz FM and 5 kHz AM offset frequencies of the currently authorized main broadcast channels.

"Through the adoption of appropriate rules and regulations, broadcast offset frequencies could be safely used without harm to existing adjacent main channel broadcast facilities." - *Michael C. Trahos, D.O., KB4PGC*

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"The FCC has firmly established that low power radio is not an efficient use of spectrum. Current minimum power levels were imposed to further the Commission's goal of providing stable, efficient and diverse radio service to the public.

"A microradio service, such as the proposal in RM-9208, would create small islands of usable coverage in an ocean of interference. Low power stations would only be heard by a small number of people, and for all practical purposes, would be unavailable to mobile audiences.

"NAB supports [FCC] efforts to get illegal, unlicensed broadcasters off the air because they continue to cause interference to our nation's airline safety, public safety and licensed broadcasters." - *National Association of Broadcasters*

"The FCC has of late established a habit and pattern of attempting to regulate intrastate commerce, utilizing enforcement tactics against so-called microbroadcasters which include pre-dawn raids on private homes by armored 'officials' bearing automatic weapons, temporary arrest ('kidnapping') of private citizens in the pursuit of such raids, and seizure and forfeiture ('theft') of private property." - *David Moore, Norman OK*

"We were transmitting in the city of Tampa, FL for approximately 1 1/2 years. We were the only Christian Spanish Radio in our city. On April 20, 1998 the FCC seized and forfeited our transmission equipment bringing our intent to regenerate our community to a halt.

The FCC thinks they did a great thing. What they don't know is that there were people in a nursing home waiting for our radio station to be on so that they could listen to songs, messages and programs that would give them hope and encouragement to go on with their lives.

There were people in prison hoping to get through the busy phone lines to request a song that told them that God still loved them. The FCC really did not shut me down, the FCC shut down the people anxious to change their lives in a positive way." - *Rev. Alberto Acosta, Tampa FL*

NY HAMS AWARDED AT RED CROSS CEREMONY

At a ceremony on April 28, 1998 in Albany, New York, the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York recognized the role amateur radio played in the January 1998 Ice Storm Operations, along with the continued support hams provide the disaster relief agency throughout the year.

The *Annual Good Neighbor Award* recipient for 1998 was New York RACES. Anthony Pazzola WB2BEJ and April Stack K2ZCZ, accepted the award on behalf of all New York State ARES/RACES radio amateurs who sup-

ported the Ice Storm Operations. The Good Neighbor Award is given to an individual or organization outside of the American Red Cross for significant humanitarian contribution to the local, national, or international community.

The award will be transferred by Pazzola and Stack to New York RACES State Radio Officer Ken Goetz N2SQW of Greene County where it will be displayed in the radio room of New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) known to New York Amateurs as "The Bunker."

AMATEUR RADIO STATION CALL SIGNS

...sequentially issued as of the first of May 1998:

Radio District	Group A Extra	Group B Advanced	Group C Tech/Gen.	Group D Novice
0 (*)	AB0HN	KI0MX	(***)	KC0DJR
1 (*)	AA1TO	KE1JO	(***)	KB1CTB
2 (*)	AB2FF	KG2OF	(***)	KC2DLN
3 (*)	AA3RD	KF3BP	(***)	KB3CNL
4 (*)	AF4JM	KU4RI	(***)	KF4YEU
5 (*)	AC5PV	KM5QF	(***)	KD5EBZ
6 (*)	AD6FE	KQ6VT	(***)	KF6QPY
7 (*)	AB7XW	KK7NF	(***)	KD7BOT
8 (*)	AB8CM	KI8FX	(***)	KC8KAO
9 (*)	AA9VZ	KG9NK	(***)	KB9SRV
N. Mariana	NH0E	AH0AZ	KH0GW	WH0ABJ
Guam	(**)	AH2DH	KH2TJ	WH2ANW
Hawaii	NH7H	AH6PJ	KH7JP	WH6DEN
Am.Samoa	AH8P	AH8AH	KH8DM	WH8ABF
Alaska	AL0K	AL7RD	KL0OO	WL7CUS
Virgin Isl.	(**)	KP2CN	NP2KC	WP2AIJ
Puerto Rico	NP3W	KP3BG	NP3WH	WP4NNQ

* = All 1-by-2 & 2-by-1 call signs have been assigned.

** = All 2-by-1 call signs have been assigned.

*** = Group "C" (N-by-3) call signs have now run out in all call sign districts. (2x3 now being assigned.)

Note: New prefix numerals now being assigned in Puerto Rico (KP3/NP3), Hawaii (AH7/KH7/NH7) and Alaska (AL0/KL0)

[Source: FCC Amateur Service Database, Washington, DC]

NEW AND UPGRADING AMATEUR STATISTICS

For the Month of April 1997 & 1998

License Class	New Amateurs		Upgrading Amateurs	
	1997	1998	1997	1998
Novice	93	88	5	0
Technician	2682	1431	11	3
Tech Plus	221	173	437	361
General	29	42	415	408
Advanced	2	5	317	277
Extra Class	4	2	230	188
Club/Empty	188	70	0	0
Total:	3219	1811	1425	1237
Decrease:		(43.7%)		(13.2%)

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GMRS USERS TO FIGHT "UNIVERSAL LICENSING"

The FCC's "Universal Licensing" *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (NPRM, Docket WT 98-20) contains more than just a reduction in paperwork for license applicants in the General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS). The NPRM proposes to dramatically "deregulate" the service, dropping most of the GMRS rules.

"The biggest losers would be repeater operators, repeater users, and GMRS mobile station operators," according to Personal Radio Exchange (PRE), a GMRS newsletter.

GMRS is the Personal Radio Service at 460 MHz that recently observed its 50th anniversary -- one of the oldest radio services in the U.S.

GMRS licenses are available only to private individuals, though business entities were eligible under previous rules. More than 3,500 repeaters are listed in the GMRS National Repeater Guide known as the "Red Book."

No examination is needed, but the GMRS license application requires knowledge of the different types of GMRS stations and frequency assignment rules. The FCC seems to have resisted requests over the years to simplify the form -- until now, when it has proposed to delete everything on the form except for the applicant's name and address.

Since the applicant's name and address alone are of little use to the FCC, it could easily drop GMRS licensing altogether as it did with CB in the 1970s.

The proposed rules also would:

- Permit any GMRS station to use any frequency at any time. Repeater users could change frequencies, and could transmit on frequencies already occupied by other repeaters (§95.29 (b), (c), (d) and §95.121 deleted).
- Permit use of any repeater even without permission of the repeater licensee (§95.53(f), §95.59(c), and §95.173(b)(3) deleted).
- Permit simplex transmissions on the input frequencies of repeaters. (§95.29(a)(3) deleted). This practice caused widespread QRM to repeaters, until the FCC prohibited it in 1989. The NPRM proposes to allow "input simplex" again, without explanation.
- Permit a repeater to retransmit signals intended to be retransmitted by another repeater, potentially increasing repeater-to-repeater interference (§95.57 deleted).
- Permit fixed service (base-to-base) operation (§95.55 deleted).

All of these changes would apply to businesses that are still licensed in GMRS as well as to personal licensees.

We asked Corwin Moore, WB8UPM, coordinator of the Personal Radio Steering Group and publisher of the PRE, for his comments on the NPRM. He said:

"We recently contacted more than a dozen GMRS leaders around the country to alert them to the implications of the NPRM, and to get their reactions. We also regularly survey PRE subscribers.

"There is growing sympathy for expanding the number of channels on which personal licensees could operate. In general, the users we contacted favor increasing channel availability, but only under controlled circumstances.

"Many GMRS users are 'refugees' from CB and desperately want to avoid the CB problems. A 1987 FCC proposal to adopt GMRS all-channel operations drew a lot of opposition by users who feared the 'CB-ization' of GMRS.

"The vast majority of survey respondents oppose all-channel operation for repeaters or high-profile base stations. It would really create extreme difficulties for the FCC-required, and generally successful, user-based system of frequency and tone coordination.

"I'd say that GMRS users around the country are more concerned with the NPRM's proposal to eliminate the points of communications rules than with expanding channel use. The FCC has long had a policy that restricts point-to-point, or base-to-base, use of GMRS and other private land mobile radio frequencies.

"Removing that restriction would lead to hobby DX-ing of repeaters and chit-chat that would interfere with regular mobile use. A mobile-oriented radio service such as GMRS would be seriously, and perhaps even fatally, compromised if base-to-base usage proliferates.

"Exacerbating this fear is that the NPRM proposes to drop all requirements that users of a repeater first license for or obtain permission to use it. Without this legal authority to determine who could use their stations, and for what purposes, repeater operators would lose any meaningful control over their repeaters.

"Finally, the GMRS users we contacted also object to the FCC quietly slipping this proposal for such radical changes into a rulemaking that otherwise contains valuable concepts to simplify licensing. They are concerned that adopting an all-channels-for-all-stations approach for GMRS would lead to delicensing of the service altogether."

Information about the NPRM is available on the Web at <<http://www.provide.net/~prsg>>. Comments on WT Docket 98-20 were due May 7, 1998, with reply comments due May 22nd.

Commenters must submit a signed original plus four copies to: The Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington DC 20554.

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MAJOR HAM COUNTRIES ON DEREGULATION PATH

E-mail messages received from Germany and the UK advise of major Amateur Radio deregulation.

Herwig Feichtinger, DC1YB (of Peterhausen, Bavaria) writes that the German Bundesamt fuer Post and Telekommunikation (BAPT) has completed a major restructuring of Germany's Amateur Radio Service.

PREVIOUS GERMAN AMATEUR SERVICE LINE UP:

Old Class "A": required 6 words-per-minute Morse code exam with privileges consisting of a few HF band segments. Similar to our Novice Class.

Old Class "B": required 12 wpm Morse code and technical exam. All HF/VHF/UHF frequency privileges.

Old Class "C": No Morse code exam. Full VHF/UHF privileges, no HF.

NEW DEREGULATED GERMAN AMATEUR SERVICE

New Class 1: Send and hear Morse code at 12 words-per-minute (including International call signs, Q-codes and abbreviations. Simulated QSO text.) Essay type answers on technical/legal issues examination will be changed to new multiple choice format. The number and content of questions on examination has not yet been determined and BAPT will use current questions/exams until September. Privileges are all bands, all modes. Power output levels are based on field strengths in the environment. Class 1 is compatible with CEPT Class 1.

New Class 2: VHF and higher frequency privileges. Same technical test as Class 1 but without code examination. VHF bands start at 144 MHz - not 50 MHz - due to need to limit 6 meter transmissions since some broadcast TV transmitters still use the band. Class 2 is compatible with CEPT Class 2.

New Class 3: Includes 2 meters and 70 cm (450 MHz) only, no HF. Maximum 10 watt EIRP. Reduced technical examination (with 75% answered correct) to encourage the public to enter amateur radio. Not CEPT compatible. No Class 3 licenses have yet been issued.

The German DARC (their national amateur radio society) wanted more than three license classes but that did not happen. There were some surprises in the new German ham service. All currently licensed Class A (6 wpm code and limited HF) and Class B (12 wpm code, full HF) were converted to the new Class 1 with full all band/all mode amateur privileges without further examination or restrictions. This would be similar to U.S. Novices and Tech Plus operators being converted to Amateur Extra Class without examination! The old Class C license was converted to Class 2.

And the new German law does not limit the power amplifier output for Class 1 and 2 to a certain power. Instead the new rules specify that the electromagnetic radiation reaching people or electronic equipment must be

below certain levels averaged over 6 minutes.

"In most cases - especially in cities, this means a lower output power than before," Herwig said. "The old kilowatt power amplifiers are now impossible to use since the radiated power exceeds the limits." The new authorized field strengths:

1-10 MHz	87/square root of frequency (V/m electric) or 0.73/frequency (A/m magnetic.)
10-400 MHz	27.5 (V/m electric) or 0.073/frequency (A/m magnetic).
400-2000 MHz	1.375/sq. root (freq) (V/m electric) or 0.0037/sq. root (freq) (A/m magnetic)
2-300 GHz	61 V/m electric or 0.16 (A/m magnetic)

All transmitters at one QTH capable of being able to transmit simultaneously are added together to get the sum of their field strengths. "Every amateur must be able to show that his rigs will comply with the above limits. So there's a lot to calculate before switching the transmitter on," Herwig added. He also said that the BAPT proposes to delete S-25.2 at the next WRC. (S-25.2 is the international restriction that requires manual Morse code skills when the operation takes place below 30 MHz.)

RSGB CHANGES POLICY ON MORSE CODE EXAM!

Tony Smith, G4FAI (Sheringham, Norfolk - England) writes us that the *Radio Society of Great Britain* (the RSGB is Great Britain's national ham society) no longer supports the retention of the mandatory Morse code test required for access to the amateur bands below 30 MHz.

Accordingly, it will attempt to sway opinion within the International Amateur Radio Union to ensure that the IARU's position at the ITU World Radio Conference in 2001 will be to support the abandonment of the international statutory Morse code proficiency requirement.

As an interim measure, the RSGB has proposed to the Radiocommunications Agency (the RA is the UK equivalent of our FCC) that a new All Bands License be introduced in the United Kingdom, which will give all amateurs access to the HF bands below 30 MHz after passing a Morse test of 5 wpm. The RA supports this proposal and the Society hopes that the new licence can be introduced as quickly as possible.

This change of policy by the RSGB follows after only eighteen months when it announced (in December 1996) the results of a survey on "The Future of Amateur Radio", when thirty percent of members responded and two-thirds of those indicated their belief that Morse should remain as an international licensing requirement.

The Council of the Society has apparently taken further wide input from members and non-members, sufficient to persuade itself that the results of the 1996 survey relative to the Morse test should not be taken into account in formulating policy.